



Ex-CBI Roundup

— CHINA — BURMA — INDIA —

ATE SECTION

APRIL
1968

NSUKI

SACHATI.

LUMDING.





INFORMATION PLEASE! Here's another unidentified photo . . . if you think it's a Dutch windmill you're mistaken. This is another picture from the collection of Julius Rosenfeld. Can you identify it?

EX-CBI ROUNDUP

CHINA · BURMA · INDIA



Vol. 23, No. 4

April, 1968

Ex-CBI ROUNDUP, established 1946, is a reminiscing magazine published monthly except AUGUST and SEPTEMBER at 117 South Third Street, Laurens, Iowa, by and for former members of U. S. Units stationed in the China-Burma-India Theater during World War II. Ex-CBI Roundup is the official publication of the China-Burma-India Veterans Association.

Neil L. Maurer

Editor

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Letter FROM The Editor . . .

● **This month's cover** is a 1945 photo of Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Pick, who built the Ledo Road and led the first American convoy into China. U.S. Army photograph.

● **The "yelp for help"** for an identification of Venus, which appeared in Roundup last month, has now brought in a couple of replies. Look for them in the next issue . . . and let us know if you can identify the picture on page 2 of this issue. We'll be asking you about more pictures from month to month.

● **Power of the press** was shown in a recent letter to the editor of a New Delhi daily: "Dear editor," a reader wrote. "Thursday I lost a gold watch which I valued very highly. Immediately, I inserted an ad in your lost-and-found column and waited. Yesterday I went home and found the watch in the pocket of another suit. God bless your paper."

● **Rickshaws**, both cycle and hand-pulled, are apparently on the way out in India. The labor ministry has circulated to all the states a five-year phased program for their replacement by auto-rickshaws. "The sight of man pulling man for his livelihood is revolting to the sense of human dignity," the ministry circular said. And so the wheels of progress roll on in what was once CBI-land.

● **Don't forget** to make reservations for your family at Hotel Savery in Des Moines for the 1968 CBI reunion!

APRIL, 1968

Ledo-Assam Service

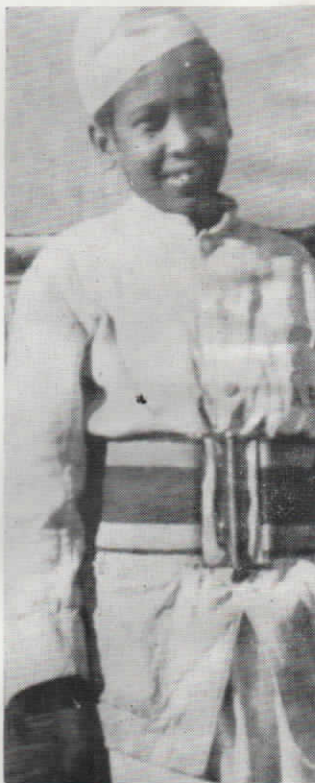
● As a World War II veteran with 1½ years in the Ledo, Assam, area, I am looking forward to reading Ex-CBI Roundup.

JOHN T. SELAND,
Minneapolis, Minn.

Hospital Chaplain

● Was first chaplain with 20th General Hospital on the Ledo Road, Assam, India, March 1943.

LOUIS J. MEYER, JR.,
(Rt. Rev. Msgr.),
Springfield, Pa.



THIS LAD was employed during World War II at the Red Cross Club at Tagap, on the Ledo Road. Photo by Warren S. Jones.



ANYONE who got to Calcutta during World War II will recognize the Hindustan Building, Base Section 2 Headquarters. Photo by Howard B. Gorman.

Collects Stamps

● Robert C. Walton, a CBI-er who has been ill for the past year, is collecting stamps as a hobby. They can be either U.S. or foreign, used or unused. Anyone with stamps for his collection may send them to him at 20521 Meyers Road, Detroit, Mich. 48235. He served in CBI as a sergeant with Headquarters 1st Combat Cargo Group, as a carpenter.

VERA SEDER,
Milwaukee, Wis.

Assam Dragon

● On page 23 of the July 1967 issue is a letter from R. J. Kirkpatrick, telling about the use of the slogan "My Assam Dragon" on a truck in Chabau. I am not trying to take away from the fun of his idea, but the first time I ever saw this slogan used was on a P-40 of the Flying Tigers in early 1943. I can't remember who the pilot was, but he had the full treatment, which included a plane-length, fierce, snorting

Chinese dragon in at least five colors of paint, with tail very obviously scraping the ground, accompanied by many sparks and other signs of friction. Then the slogan was affixed to the side of the airplane as described in Mr. Kilpatrick's letter; you can get the total effect. I feel impelled to write every once in a while, just to hold up the honor of the 492nd Bomb Squadron, 7th Bomb Group (H), in which I was a pilot from January 1943 to January 1944 and the much-maligned and neglected 5319th Flexible Gunnery School in Karachi, where we spent many happy hours landing in dust storms and getting the empennage shot up and off by our many Chinese gunnery students. The theatrical agency and personal management business in Hollywood is much more mundane and certainly a lot less exciting, but any ex-CBI-ers who would like to chew the fat over lunch can contact me at 464-5157. As everyone else tells you, keep up the good work; I am certainly glad there is one person as dedicated as you to keep the magazine going, because it is a tremendous pleasure to read it each month.

WILLIAM F. WAGNER,
Hollywood, Calif.

Second in Family

● When Sgt. Dennis Cole, 20, of Reseda, Calif., recently won the Silver Star for gallantry in action in Vietnam, he was the second in his family to win the award. His father, Robert Cole, who recently retired from the Los Angeles Police Department after an impressive 20-year career, earned two Silver Stars while a member of Merrill's Marauders during World War II.

(From a newspaper article in the Van Nuys News, submitted by W. R. Seccombe, Canoga Park, Calif., formerly of Chanyi, China.)

EX-CBI ROUNDUP



BURNING GHAT at Calcutta, India, with relatives of the deceased arranging the funeral pyre. Photo by J. L. Rosenfeld.

Seeks CBI Friend

● Was with the 89th Air Service Squadron, 54th Air Service Group (Kurmitola-Tezgaon) near Dacca, India. In Calcutta I met a friend from civilian life, a Red Cross girl, Miss Roseanne Guson. Would like to hear from anyone who knew her, or from members of my old outfit.

ROBERT L. COLAIZZI,
15 Summer Street,
West Rosbury, Mass. 02132

William G. Crase

● William G. Crase of Eugene, Ore., a CBI veteran of World War II (677 Bomb Squadron), died February 9, 1968, at Portland Veterans Hospital of lung cancer.

MRS. VIRGIE L. CRASE,
505 Oakway Rd.
Eugene, Ore.

Earl S. Hoag

● Major General Earl S. Hoag, USAF (ret.), died March 3, 1968, at Washington, D. C. He was commanding general of Air Transport Command in CBI

interment in Arlington National Cemetery. His widow, Louise, survives.

(From information sent in by L. H. Ruppenthal, Col. USAFR (ret.), McPherson, Kans.)

375th Bomb Squadron

● It was only recently that I learned of your publication. I am Protestant chaplain at the Veterans Administration Center in Martinsburg, W. Va. One of our patients, who was a nurse in the CBI Theater during World War II, told me of the magazine and let me read some of the copies. One of the first things I saw was a picture of the walled city of Chengkung, China. You can imagine the excitement I experienced when I saw this, since I was stationed at Chengkung during World War II with the 375th Bomb Squadron of the 308th Bomb Group. I am very glad to know that we have such a publication since it will bring back many memories of CBI again and perhaps enable many of us to get in contact again with some of our former buddies of the theater.

FRED A. DUCKETT,
Winchester, Va.



BUILDING at Darjeeling, India, as it appeared in 1944. Photo by J. L. Rosenfeld.



EN ROUTE to Des Moines for the 1968 reunion this summer, CBIers from the east driving into Iowa over the Interstate highway system may want to visit the Hoover Presidential Library and Museum at West Branch.

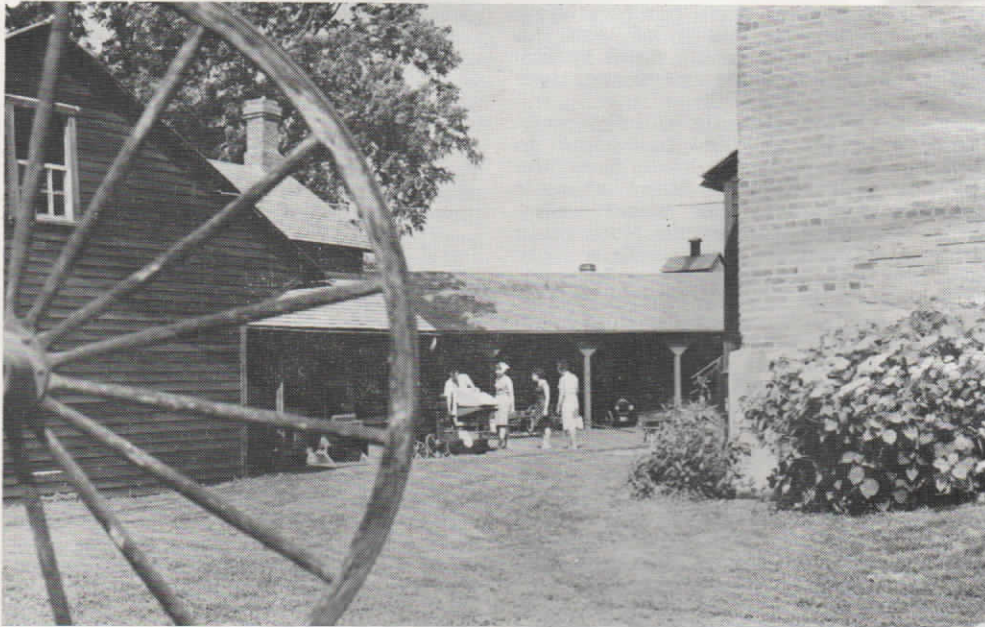


ANOTHER historical building in the 33-acre park at West Branch is the cottage in which President Herbert Hoover was born. The beautifully landscaped grave area is also one of the stopping points on the grounds of this national monument.

EX-CBI ROUNDUP



ALSO on the way to Des Moines are the ever-interesting Amana Colonies, consisting of seven villages founded in 1854 by German immigrants, followers of a simple faith who called themselves the community of True Inspiration. Here is a corner of the meat market in one of the villages.



AMANA today stands for progressive living in an old-world setting. The colonies are equally famous for their hospitality and excellent food. Here is an interesting side view of the Ox Yoke Inn, owned and operated by CBler Bill Leichsenring.

APRIL, 1968

The Bloody Rockpile

Two retreats—a tired C-46 and an ex-CBI pilot—faced the toughest mission of their lives together: a repeat flight, twenty years later, over the ruggedest mountain range in the world—The Hump.

(First of Two Installments)

By BLISS K. THORNE

Reprinted From ARGOSY Magazine

When Captain Ben Keith peered down the length of the runway, it looked as though a thousand spears were aimed at him from the other end. But then, on second glance, he could see that they were simply bamboo shafts hacked off at midheight, forming an illusion of bunched weapons.

Anyway, why should any sense of danger unnerve him? Closer, right in the jungle, where its thick growth packed tight against the concrete edges of the landing strip, there were snakes, assorted cats and elephants wild enough to smash a big airplane out of shape—and they didn't worry him at all. Back in an earlier era, he had lived in that same jungle for more than a year and had survived the big game, the poisonous centipedes and the anopheles buzz bombers. Now the only thing on his mind was the plane, the plane that could make history—if the worst happened and anyone ever actually heard about it.

As he started to walk quietly down the runway, the sky had just begun to lighten, dawn edging down from the foothills, from the First Ridge where it seeped slowly into the broad valley whose level floor formed the flood plain of the Brahmaputra River. Like a wary bird, like a student pilot whose instructor had told him to keep on the lookout for the enemy by swiveling his head, Keith looked from side to side to reassure himself that the plane had remained hidden during all the repairs performed on it. It was invisible. Very good—teek hi!

Your thoughts could easily wander like this at sunup in Upper Assam, Keith mused as he padded down the strip. Especially on a day so exciting, you were conscious of each breath you took, and each moment felt like an adventure. The "spears" aimed at you: Were they symbolic? Maybe. But spears couldn't hurt you much—not compared to the possible dangers of the upcoming flight. And, in

this case, you could explain the would-be spears.

When the local Assamis had been hired to get the World War II landing strip ready again for use, the babus, or foremen, had explained the job precisely: clear the strip itself, every square inch of it, but don't bother about any of the jungle growth bordering it. Recognizing the authority of the babus, who ranked high in the scheme of things, the hard-working coolies had complied exactly. Instead of taking out the big clumps of bamboo at the runway end, they had hacked off the slender trunks at midheight as they hung over the concrete. The result was the weird illusion of a mass of weapons aimed at the far end of the runway.

A third of the way down the strip, Keith stopped. He knew he stood close to the plane. His nose told him so, assaulted suddenly by the mixed aromas of hundred octane, hydraulic fluid, oils—the scents of an engineered civilization sharply intruding into the wet-earth smell of bamboo, vines, wild pepper and palm. Keith was pleased, pleased at the way he had detected the plane and pleased at the 1968 jungle mix of smells. That's what the beginning of the mission would be—a combination of the civilized and the jungle, the known and the unexpected.

He stepped off the runway into elephant grass, then pushed his way through tea bushes gone wild, leftovers from the time the strip had been set originally in the midst of a plantation. When he had penetrated twenty feet into the growth, he glanced back toward the strip. It had already disappeared in the dense green. Moving forward again he parted the grass that towered over his head, and there, with the area immediately around it freshly cleared, loomed the plane.

He stopped to take it all in. Physically, he had no choice: suddenly he was breathing so hard he almost suffered vertigo. There in front of him stood the old monster in which he was going to make one of the most dangerous—and momentous—flights of his lifetime. The ancient

bird that had been left in the jungle would rise phoenixlike out of its ashes—green ashes—to shake off more than twenty years of decay and attempt the most spectacular flight in transport history. The ugly, obscene relic—for two decades the home of mynah birds, mongooses and cobras—would take off once more from the land under the southern palisades of the Himalayas and blast herself over those five-mile-high mountains. Once more, she was going to fly the Hump—this time into a China politically stained red.

Keith had seen the plane briefly the day before at dusk, getting there over a trail newly cut through the jungle from the nearby village. He had sat up a good part of the night talking to the engineers who had wrought the miracle of making the plane flyable again. At their campsite in the jungle not far away, they had unfolded to him details of their wonderful feat. Ironic, Keith thought, that even though they did not know the real reason for their exploit, they had gone ahead and accomplished it with such élan. Keith, who was one up on them because he did know the reason, had been no less impressed by their incredible story.

Shortly after the United States Government had decided that the advantages of a proposed secret flight into China outweighed the risks involved, certain officials of the highest diplomatic level had visited India and explained to their Indian counterparts how completion of the mission might bring peace to the Far East.

Getting India's agreement to look the other way while the flight was planned and while the plane and airstrip were prepared for use had been a rare diplomatic success and in the words of those involved, one "hell of a beautiful sweat job."

Their reason for wooing India was simply this: making U-2 flights out of Turkey without revealing the purpose of the operation had alienated a good friend—Turkey. Now, so necessary was this special flight into Communist China and so speedily must it be accomplished, that keeping India in the dark would be in order. But, as with Turkey, a mistake might have disastrous consequences.

And so it was established diplomatically that India, for a brief period, would officially keep its eyes off Assam—the province in the northeast corner of the subcontinent where Tibet, north Burma and India meet—while the plan moved quickly ahead.

A group of civilian engineers of mixed mixed nationalities and of mixed specialties—aeronautical, mechanical, aircraft-

powerplant and big construction—met secretly at the Great Eastern Hotel, Calcutta, and then traveled as far into Upper Assam as regular commercial airline service could take them. Purportedly acting as agriculturalists interested in expanding the acreage of Assam's tea plantations, they then chartered a light plane that carried them farther up into the province and made fast observation flights low over the old Hump bases strung along the Brahmaputra, near villages like Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and Ledo.

Time, the alternately steaming and baking monsoons, and earthquakes had changed the land some since the great World War II airlift of 1942-45. But near a hamlet called Doom Dooma, where headhunters from the hills mingled with native tea workers, artisans and keepers of tiny shops, they found not only a mile long strip that might be reclaimed from the jungle, but among the many C-46 wrecks around it, they discovered one that looked from the air as though her fuselage and wing might still be intact.

Returning to Doom Dooma by truck, they performed successful reconnaissance on the ground. What had been a serviceable concrete runway, built by the British Army in 1942 right after General Silwell and the Americans had been kicked out of Burma, now was mostly jungle-covered, with shrubs and vines and bamboo closing in.

The hairy-eared construction engineers quietly pushed their way through the growth, took folding machetes and spades out of their packs and, despite brutal heat, quickly cleared a twenty-by-twenty area right down to the concrete. Their spokesman said quietly, "With manpower, we can turn this into a new runway."

The equally quiet aeronautical engineers borrowed their colleagues' machetes and cut their way to the C-46 that had seemed intact from the air. They too were in luck: the C-46 had simply been left in her revetment for good at war's end. Not only was she in one piece; she still stood on her landing gear, though insects had eaten the tires off the wheels.

"I'll have to be drunk just to go inside her, but she has a wing, a fuselage and landing gear," one aeronautical engineer said. "We could hang engines and props on her, instrument her, rebuild everything. It would be harder than making a new plane, but we could do it." Then he smiled. "We'll have to find some real nuts to fly it."

All the engineers returned to the Great Eastern in Calcutta. Back in civilization, with steak and brandy on the table and any kind of entertainment within call, the visit to Assam's bamboo seemed un-

real. Quietly, the men began their posh dinner together. They drank slowly—and long—before they ordered any food. But the Indian brandy was a real booster and silence and thought turned abruptly to smiles and speculation.

Mukerjee, the chief aeronautical engineer from Bombay, who had studied in the States at Carnegie Tech, looked at Donovan, the head of the construction engineers.

"Sure, You could put the strip back in operation. Why not? For that matter, stick a little bulldozer in the nose of a Saturn Five, blast it up into orbit and a little boy could make a landing strip on the moon. Nothing to it. You got it made. All you need is a thousand sweepers to do the work."

Donovan looked straight at Mukerjee. Always serious, he remembered how his khakis had turned wet-black after a few seconds in the bamboo outside Doom Dooma.

"Easy? That wasn't all bamboo. Trees were growing right up through the cement. Easy? In that heat?"

Mukerjee's handsome features framed a wide smile around his snow-white teeth. "Easy. We fly up an air-conditioner, a case of Bullfight Brandy. We sit you in a tent and you tell the sweepers what to do. Nice work, man."

Donovan's thick eyebrows queried the heavens. "What about those trees?"

"Pull the trees and have the sweepers fill in the holes with monsoon mud. Just like cement. Easy. Now that plane. That's something."

Donovan's silence meant that he had to agree there. The plane was a job.

Mukerjee smiled at him, then turned serious. He outlined in minute detail just how the plane would be totally revitalized, with everything but the metal of the wing and fuselage replaced.

He marveled, "What a fantastic job! Instead of just taking a chance and flying another plane into Assam to do the job," He quickly dismissed that thought. "Much too much of a risk. That would kill the whole mission."

And so the work had been done, the strip readied and the plane reborn, with the whole village nearby engaged. Now strip and plane awaited the final act of the drama.

CHAPTER TWO

Gazing at the old C-46 in the rising sun, Keith felt a surge of elation. Actually there was only one thing for him to check on now.

On his way to the engineers' mess the day before, he had wondered if, at the

last vital moment, the native workers might get curious about the plane and accidentally louse up the works.

Mukerjee had ordered one of the babus to hire some special guards for the night. Doom Dooma had all kinds of janglah men wandering through it almost any day: among them, huge Tibetans who came out of the hills trying to sell agates and religious charms, and naked Nagas with a penchant for heads. Also, small bands of other wild men from somewhere in the Himalayas passed through the village frequently, hoping to find work. These men were the ones who had been hired as guards.

Ready for breakfast now, an uneasy Keith walked back to the runway. The adept engineers had put the plane back into extraordinary shape, mechanically, but she still did look literally a sad wreck. Who would dare board her?

Why hadn't he thought of ironing out that wrinkle! With a little special instruction, the big plane could have been scoured and scrubbed clean so that no one—not even his copilot—would have doubts about the serviceability of the aircraft. Damn it! Why hadn't he at least made her look good, appear as if everything was go!

Parked on the black, smelly earth in the bamboo and the vines, she did have a look of vermin, mold and slime. The dull gray and dark green of the old camouflage paint now conveyed a sense of decay, of rot. The plane resembled a derelict, a part of bloody old air-war history that should be allowed to sink for good into the mud.

Slowly Keith trudged back down the runway, heading for his copilot's tent. He had to show him what the plane looked like and study his reaction. An improper attitude, a negative approach, could mean failure, an end of a flight that might be a turning point in international relations.

The wise men in Washington, the men who steered the country's way through all the world's political nuclear icebergs, had been told a secret agent inside Red China must be airlifted out to bring vital information about the earth-shaking happenings in Peking to the United States in person.

Acquainted with the risks, they were told no comparable mission had ever succeeded, but they had elected to go.

The first reaction of the men in the field: "Impossible!" Then their blood pressure settled down and someone said, "If it were possible, how would we do it?"

What was needed most? A pilot who could take a plane from anywhere outside mainland China into China and

back out again in one piece, carrying the U.S. agent safely, and do this with a minimum number of people in on the mission, and do the whole thing not only with speed, but immediately.

One of the practical types handling the project, an Air Force general, who in 1944 and 1945, had flown the Hump as a duty pilot, started to offer himself as pilot. Saturated in sudden sweat, he checked his rash thoughts abruptly. Hell, he'd have to train again; he'd have to restudy Hump geography; he'd have to try to learn navigation meteorology all over again! He sweated even more as he realized what a damn fool he had been—almost. But he was on the right track.

With a fine air of cool deliberation, he said aloud, "I know what we need. A pilot who flew the Hump during the war. And what's more, maybe we can find one still over there flying commercial."

Luck held. The State Department's air attache in New Delhi made a fast check of all the American pilots known to be flying legally in the Far East, secured their current records through the FFA and other U.S. agencies and picked the man.

The man was Captain Ben Keith.

The note Keith found in his car on that day read; "Special meeting in Darjeeling. Take the next plane. Plan to return tonight."

He drove directly to the Calcutta airport where the airline which he served as chief pilot was headquartered.

At the ticket counter, under the listing of the departures to the north, the beautiful, uniformed Indian girl said, "You're lucky, Captain. You got the last seat."

And as the airliner took him from Calcutta to Siliguri, just under the Himalayas, Keith marveled at the happy coincidence, not suspecting hidden hands at work moving invisible strings.

At Siliguri, Keith again found things planned for him. Plane service ended there, and a train carried him north. The train was jammed, but there was one seat left and—magic!—it had been reserved for him.

But the plans seemed to end when he reached Darjeeling. He had expected to get a message, but when he arrived there—nothing, no message and no one at the station to meet him. Well, it obviously was a hurried meeting, and fast-traveling airline types didn't baby each other. The meeting most likely was scheduled for the Mount Everest Hotel, so he went there.

In the lobby, he glanced around, looking for others from his airline, but saw only strangers. When he introduced himself to the desk man and asked where he

could find the officials of Far East Airways, the clerk only looked blank. Then he suddenly came to.

"Oh! Captain Keith! There is a personal message for you. You're expected 'on the hill.' That's all I know, Captain. That's the whole message."

Keith had a number of times before been to Darjeeling, made famous by Kipling long ago, and he tried to remember what "on the hill" meant. Directly above the Mount Everest Hotel stood a clinic run by an Indian doctor, but there was not much else about. Still mystified, Keith left the hotel and walked to the center of the town, then took the paved path that seemed to lead to the highest elevation overlooking the area. As he strolled upward, he sensed for the first time something bizarre about the trip and rendezvous.

Tired and perplexed, he followed the steep pathway upward, ascending to a part of the Hill Station where the paved walk spiraled to the top of the highest hill over the town; soon he would be unable to go farther. Annoyed, he negotiated a sudden twist in the path and drew up abruptly.

At this elevation, the walk had been cut out of naked rock. Straight ahead stood a small Hindu shrine. Religious figures had been carved in the rock wall and painted in totally out-of-place colors: gaudy, bright blue, yellow so yellow it hurt, and blood-red. Keith gasped as he strolled slowly within a few feet of the figures of Siva and Krishna and gory Kali.

As he stared, a disembodied voice said in calm American-English, "Hello, Captain. I'm sorry I had to be so mysterious about his. Glad to meet you."

A tall, handsome young man had stepped suddenly out of the shadows of the rocks to one side of the carved figures, smiling and holding his hand out. Keith took the hand and shook it.

The young man said, "Maybe we could have met right down in the hotel, but I've never been in on anything quite like this before."

Keith dropped the young man's hand, thought about the mysterious message and his earlier intimation that it was all a hoax and felt hot anger.

"Well," he asked with undisguised venom, "just who the hell are you, and what are we doing in this damned forsaken place?"

After a long, heated, embarrassed silence, the young man did speak. "My name is Alexander Arnold. I'm the U.S. air attache in Delhi. I needed to meet you in absolute privacy. Could we stroll back to the Mount Everest Hotel?"

Keith wheeled and stalked down the

pathway without another word. Arnold fell in step beside him, constantly looking ahead to make sure no one could overhear them. In a very few words, he explained that a flight had to be made, secretly and quickly, from India to China and back to India, to bring out a U.S. secret agent who was in China. He gave Keith only the bare bones of the mission, but no more was necessary.

"How did you pick me?" Keith asked.

"You made eighty-seven Hump trips in forty-three and -four. You crossed the Hump one hundred and seventy-four times. All flights were completed just as they should have been. You're an active airlines captain. You have a short vacation coming up."

Keith took a long breath and held it while he was thinking. Fly the Hump again! Wow! He looked at Arnold. "You know a lot, don't you? What else do you know?"

The attache told Keith the special mission wouldn't be flown in a nice new stateside plane. He gave Keith the details about reviving the relic of a C-46 up in the bamboo. Keith stayed silent from then until they stood in front of the Mount Everest Hotel. He looked at his watch, glanced up at the sky, took a breath, wiped his forehead.

Then he said: "Come on in. The bar's open now."

They didn't go to the bar. On the Mount Everest's great verandah, the two men took a table thirty feet from all the other guests. There the hotel bearers brought them drinks.

In a sense, it was stop and start. When it was Arnold's turn to talk, he charged ahead, thinking he made a lot of progress with Keith—and he did. But the way Keith always re-covered what had been said made the younger man think he was losing ground. As Arnold introduced problems, Keith listened carefully and then, in going over them, he solved most of them.

The catch-as-catch-can conversation went for hours. Keith said he would work the flight and saw no personal obstacle preventing it.

On Arnold's side, the young air attache knew everything he needed to know about the older pilot's flying. Textbook case, he thought. World War II flying cadet, flew many Hump missions, got bored with flying in the U.S. in the post-war period, drifted back to the Far East where he became an airlines captain and lived a good life. All professional, could write the book.

And little by little, Keith learned something about the other man almost a generation his junior. He had never met an air attache before. How did a man be-

come one? And what was Arnold's flying background? That was what counted.

Simple: He had gotten his private license by flying one of his family's planes, had gone through the Air Force Academy and had aimed at diplomacy even when flying. Before his assignment to the Embassy at Delhi, he had studied everything he could about the past flying history of the Far East. He didn't put it into words to Keith, but he considered himself a kind of authority on old Hump operations.

An unusual proportion of Keith's time in the air was actual instruments—on the gauges in storms, some typhoons. A large proportion of Arnold's time in the air wasn't in the air; it was in trainers and simulators. Keith felt solidity in all his actual instrument time; Arnold was at home in the world of electronics.

While not considering himself a "voice of experience," the sight of the peaks surrounding Darjeeling and the Mount Everest Hotel reminded Keith of the mock philosophy the Hump pilots had used on each other.

"The Hump is a rough cob, sah'b," one crew member would say to another after a tough flight from China.

Now, "The Hump's a rough cob," Keith told Arnold meditatively.

Arnold raised his hand and pointed north. "Everest's about seventy-five miles that way, isn't it? There's no Everest on the Hump. Everything's below twenty-three thousand.

Keith started to say that he had plenty of respect for mountains twenty-three thousand feet high, but he let the conversation end there.

So each in his own way felt he had the edge on the other.

At the end of the long, wet afternoon, the two of them headed for the train that would take them down to Siliguri and to their separate planes, Keith bound south for Calcutta, Arnold west for Delhi. Keith broke the silence by saying something he thought needed expression.

"You know, I didn't like the way we met. CIA stuff."

Arnold laughed.

"Now what's so funny?"

"Just from your records, I knew you wouldn't," Arnold answered.

Okay, he's one up, Keith thought. But how can he really know me from my records?

"There's something you haven't thought about," he said. "We haven't got me a copilot." Arnold frowned as Keith smiled. "Guess what? You're it— or the whole deal's off."

Arnold gave a whoop that startled the people back in the middle of Darjeeling. When he got control of himself, he re-

torted, "That's just what you were supposed to say. I've been waiting to fly the Hump all my life."

At Siliguri, Keith and Arnold parted at the airport. Two nights later, they met again in the bamboo of Upper Assam, the day before the mission over the Hump was scheduled.

CHAPTER THREE

Now, in the bamboo jungle with a plane his young copilot might be reluctant to step into, Keith frowned. He would have to show the C-46 to Arnold and watch the young man's reaction.

One thing favored the situation: When Arnold reached Upper Assam, he seemed to have left Delhi and the Embassy completely behind him. In the, bamboo Keith saw that only the future mattered to the air attache. Arnold was a healthy, strong man, eager for adventure, eager to try the Hump, eager to get back to India—eager about everything. Nothing about Assam had discouraged him during his brief hour there. He laughed at the heat, the rotten food, the mud, the mosquitoes and the beefing of the older men.

Shrugging fatalistically, Keith now walked over to Arnold's tent.

"Let's take a look at the plane."

Arnold smiled. "Sure, Captain."

The morning lay bright and sparkling about them as they started down the trail to the transport. They chatted inconsequentially while Keith shuddered inwardly, and soon came to the dirty, encrusted old plane.

Sleeping all around the C-46 lay the jungle men hired on as guards. Keith pointed to them.

"That's probably the coldest, most heartless bunch of men in the world."

Arnold's snort of merriment startled and annoyed him. "If they're the most heartless men, well, they're the drunk-est, too."

"Oh?" Keith responded stiffly.

"I couldn't sleep last night after we talked about the flight," Arnold explained. "You were in the sack, so I came back here myself. They wouldn't let me near the plane, so I went back to my tent and got the backpack full of Bullfight brandy I brought up from Calcutta. Do you know what happened? They finished every damned drop before I ever touched one of the bottles myself. Now look."

Arnold went to the nearest man and kicked him hard in the shoulder. It was like kicking a dead crocodile.

"See? They couldn't swat a fly." He walked from one guard to another, kicking and prodding. He chuckled. He didn't

notice the special look on Keith's face.

Finally Keith spoke: "What the hell did you do that for? We hired them to watch the plane, to make sure nothing could happen."

"Don't worry, Captain. Nothing happened. I stayed here a long time myself. I've hardly been asleep. Everything's teek hi. I checked everything."

Keith couldn't stop staring at the younger man. "You checked everything? You went aboard? You got through them?" Flabbergasted, furious, he pointed again at the jungle men. His would-be copilot was a nut. A goddamned nut.

Arnold just beamed. "Come on aboard, Captain. We're ready to go."

Keith headed toward the door of the plane, the big cargo hatch on the left side near the tail. Arnold was already inside. Halfway to the door, Keith realized that everything really was damned good, teek hi!

Arnold had seen the plane and not been the least bit bothered about its appearance. He was a pilot. He had gotten up in the middle of the night to check the plane—the thing for any pilot in his right mind to do, of course.

What if he had gotten the jungle men drunk? Wild! In the middle of the Upper Assam jungle, drinking brandy from Calcutta with an ugly bunch of killers. Yes, wild!

Keith followed Arnold into the plane and caught up with him in the cockpit. Keith sat in the left seat, the copilot in the right.

"Do you know those engines?" Keith asked, pointing to the nacelle on Arnold's right. "R-twenty-eight hundreds? Ever flown them?"

Arnold's big grin—it seemed to be almost constant with him—faded suddenly and he nodded seriously. "The best piston engines ever built."

Keith glanced at Arnold's face. The youngster was very serious, and what he had said about the power plants was true. The two men then had an acquiescent session in the cockpit, assuring themselves, in effect, about the plane's airworthiness.

"What you can say is this," Keith remarked, summing up their conversation. "This is the original skin—the wing, the tail, the fuselage—all tested and checked in every way there is. Right here where we are. Everything else is fresh out of the factory—engines, props, instruments, tires, anything you can think of. It's a new plane. And those engineers back at the camp, they're the cream from all over the world. They're like jewelers. They could handle the President's own plane blindfolded and he'd fly in it. So what they've done is

make a new transport right here where we are just as though they were working at Wright-Patterson, or Boeing or Douglas or Lockheed. You could say . . ."

"Captain, how soon can we go?"

The schedule had been worked out to the minute.

When the two pilots returned to the engineer's camp, breakfast was ready and Keith advised Arnold to take aboard all he could.

After breakfast, the pilots and the whole encampment went to the plane and the last jobs were done as though they were routine, or as though rehearsed many times—which they had been, mentally. Doom Dooma men and women plucked at the ground in the circle under the plane and cleared it like a golf green, with the elephant grass between the plane and the concrete hacked down Ivy League short.

With everything set, the whole group ate a meal under the wing and then the two pilots boarded the plane. Keith went right to the cockpit and strapped himself in. By the time Arnold had secured the door from the inside and gone forward, Keith's khakis were wringing wet.

The crowd on the ground stood off the left wing, watching. Keith glanced around the cockpit, then toward Arnold. Arnold held the plane's check list on his lap. A full printed page, it listed the complex rite of flight preparation.

Keith put his feet on the rudder pedals, pushed his toes full forward and pulled up the parking-brake handle. "Brakes set."

Arnold placed his feet on his rudder pedals, felt the upper part of the pedals ease forward under very little pressure. "Brakes set."

"Fuel?" Keith asked

Arnold's left hand dropped to the floor of the cockpit and he touched the fuel valve switches. Keith's eyes followed each small movement.

"Both engines on main tanks," Arnold said, his tone businesslike.

For careful minutes, as the eyes of both pilots coursed around the hundreds of dials, controls, switches and indicators of the cockpit and the instrument panel, the two men worked down the check list, line by line. Finally, they reached the engines' moment of truth. Keith looked out at those on the ground and circled his hand in the air so they'd know he was ready to try engine one.

"Fuel setting?" Arnold asked.

Keith moved the left engine's fuel-mixture control. "Idle cutoff," he said.

Looking away from Arnold and toward the left engine, his left hand on the wheel and his right hand over his head

fingering the electrical switches, Keith said, "Energizing." Then he gave a shout into the cockpit that was a prayer and a demand: "Now start!"

There was a heavy whirring sound in the engine and the propeller began to turn slowly. The whole plane vibrated lightly. Keith's eyes were on the revolving propeller, held in fascination. Alive? Dead? It's slow motion, he swore to himself. What's the matter with it?

The big prop continued to turn steadily, but infuriatingly laggard.

Then, after seven revolutions, several of the cylinders whammed into life. There was noise. There was smoke. The noise was the backfiring of cylinders, and a rocketing series of bangs followed, white smoke racing out of the exhaust stacks in intermittent puffs.

Keith pulled back on the throttle, reducing the fuel flow. His hand, almost acting under its own control, set the fuel-mixture control to full rich. Arnold was silent, holding his breath.

Keith had started aircraft engines tens of thousands of times and they always backfired and sputtered, but now he didn't remember that. This was the only engine starting in the world, the only one that counted, and all he heard was lousy, stinking backfiring.

Again, seeming to act on its own, Keith's hand adjusted the throttle, giving the engine more fuel, and now there was a change in the sound. The loud bangs and pops smoothed out. All the cylinders were firing, some still rough, but then the engine settled down into an even roar of strength. It was a one-ton cat, purring power. The engineers had performed their miracle.

Arnold looked out over the right wing, made the circling motion in the air, confidently signaling another engine start. Keith leaned over the controls on the pedestal, made the adjustments for the right engine and started the prop turning. Another go! There was the straining period of backfires and smoke, but again—good luck. Quickly, the rough roar changed into the smooth sound they had to hear. They had power! Good power. And plenty of it.

Arnold pointed at one gauge on the right side of the instrument panel, then to its mate on the left. Keith's eyes followed him, then he nodded.

"Oil pressure okay," Keith said, and with his right hand, made a fast thumbs-up sign. "What are we waiting for?" he shouted. "Let's get going." He looked to the men on the ground and made a forward motion with his hand.

His feet were on the rudder pedals and he pressed the upper parts forward with his toes, releasing the brakes. Arnold

forced the parking-brake handle down into the off position. Keith looked out to the left to see that all was clear, and Arnold checked the right. Again, he made a forward motion with his hand, this time a brief chop. His face was stern.

With his right hand, Keith edged the throttles forward. The props' rpms upped to a thousand and that should have started the plane forward. But it didn't. Keith felt sweat on his face.

"The wheels must have settled some," Arnold shouted.

Keith nodded grimly. "We'll get out of here." He pushed the throttles farther forward and the whole plane rattled. She moved ahead a few inches as her big wheels tried to roll out of depressions in the ground, but then settled back again.

Keith was angry. "We'll fly her onto the strip," he shouted loud above the engines' roar. He advanced the throttles again.

Like a sleeping whale come to life, the plane abruptly rolled ahead and Keith had to reduce power to keep her headed toward the strip.

As they taxied forward, Keith momentarily took his right hand from the throttles to rap Arnold on the shoulder.

"I'll watch the engines," he said, indicating the instrument panel. "You see about the plane itself."

Arnold swung his body around in his seat until he was facing the cabin. The smoothness of the engines seemed like an even wall of background for the noises coming out of the wing roots, the fuselage and the tail. There were heavy creaks as the wings rose and fell like the fins of a drugged dolphin, and jerking noises came out of the underside of the fuselage near the tail wheel.

"It's staying together," Arnold shouted, "but that's all I can say for it."

Where the improvised taxiway met the strip, Keith gunned the engines and, with a small roller-coaster effect, they hauled the old plane up onto the concrete. He jockeyed her to a position close to the end of the strip, set the brakes, and Arnold automatically pulled up the parking-brake handle. The plane was forty-five degrees to the length of the strip, the traditional run-up position.

During the taxi-out, the plane had been followed by the whole troop of engineers and the Assamis who had done all the work, chasing after her through the bamboo.

"Did you think we'd get this far?" Keith asked. Without waiting for an answer, he turned and looked back into the cabin. "It's all still with us." He shook his head pensively. "Well, no point in staying here. Let's go."

Arnold again placed the list on his lap and the two pilots went through the take-off check which was somewhat an abbreviation of the engine-start procedure.

Keith ran the left engine up to full power and both men watched the tachometer as Arnold first switched off the left and then the right magnetos. They checked the right engine the same way, then the props for blade-angle variations.

The brakes were released and Keith gunned the right engine to line the plane up for take-off. He had been holding the brakes on with his toes and now released them as he slowly, steadily eased the throttles full forward. When they were wide open, he put both hands on the wheel. Arnold placed his hands lightly on his.

Keith had been holding full left rudder to compensate for the engines' torque. As the plane rolled down the strip, he gradually released it to neutral position.

At the end of a hundred yards, the air-speed indicator, a lagging instrument at low speeds, began to show readings: forty mph . . . Seventy-five mph . . . Ninety mph . . . Halfway down the strip, dead center on the concrete, the reading was a hundred mph. The runway felt smooth, and if Arnold had looked over at Keith, he would have seen the beginning of a confident smile.

With the plane having an almost negligible payload, Keith could have safely lifted it off at 110 mph. However, he preferred to build up as much speed as possible while still on the ground, and the plane was doing close to a hundred and forty mph as they neared the end of the strip.

Suddenly, decision made, Keith pulled back on the wheel and the aircraft lifted off—smoothly and, Arnold thought, steeply.

With the bamboo shafts directly below them at the runway's end, Keith gave a jubilant shout, "Gear up."

Arnold's left hand shot quickly to the base of the pedestal and he lifted the gear level to full up position.

The aircraft had a new kind of shudder as the big landing-gear wheels rose and tucked themselves behind the engine nacelles.

Now Keith was certain the power plants were performing perfectly; he knew the fuselage, the wings and the tail were going to stay. I know it, he thought, but the men on the ground deserve to know, it too.

Instead of continuing the climb after take-off, he held the plane down so she was just skimming over the treetops

along the Brahmaputra. Arnold looked at him as the air speed kept building up and they gained no altitude.

At two hundred miles an hour, Keith hauled back on the wheel, gave the rudder a hard kick to the left and had the plane in a steep climbing bank. A chandelle. A maneuver right for a fighter-bomber, but not a crusty old transport. But in the outrageously steep bank, Keith could look back over his shoulder at the men on the ground and he believed they got the word: The plane was teek hi and he and Arnold were heading for the Himalayas.

CHAPTER FOUR

With the take-off behind him, Keith now concentrated on getting out of Assam and over the Hump. It all seemed easy; he felt quite placid and confident. But he noticed one trouble spot, if only a personally irritating one. That irritation was Arnold. Nothing he said or did, really; it was his manner.

Actually, Keith found his reservations difficult to put into words. It had something to do with Arnold's youth and zest, and Keith's experience, age and caution. Arnold was hip; Keith was square—something like that. His copilot seemed always to be laughing at him or at the way he did his job.

Keith shrugged with annoyance. The hell with it. Obviously, this was all in his own mind, just another sign of advancing age.

To the north lay the Brahmaputra, in flood broader than the Mississippi, and beyond it, the five-mile-high wall of the major Himalayan Range. Little villages dotted the banks of the Brahmaputra, so Keith stayed to the south of it, over jungles and out of sight, though paralleling the big river as he headed toward North Burma.

After the post-take-off chandelle and the low-flight air-speed build-up, Keith started a slow climb that would continue for half an hour. It was a bright afternoon and this first part of the flight was like a vulture's-eye view of the zoo of a province, Assam. But although the aircraft had already proven herself, Keith evidently still intended to check her out over and over. While his eyes constantly went from instrument to instrument, and he occasionally turned to look back into the fuselage—almost as if to assure himself of its condition—Arnold enjoyed himself by taking in the exotic scenery surrounding him.

Keith's left hand rested on the wheel and his right hand restlessly moved from one control to another on the pede-

stal. He finally lifted his eyes and looked out his window, not knowing that Arnold was watching him.

"No Zeros around, Captain. Not this year."

Keith jumped and turned. Arnold's face was mock-serious, his voice reproving.

He's right, Keith thought. Relax.

The Himalayan wall rose on the left, running east-west from China to Kashmir. Directly ahead of them lay the abrupt foothills of a spur range, perpendicular to the main Himalayas and running from Tibet down into Burma and China. On the right appeared the Naga Hills.

Mountains spread everywhere across the horizon except behind them; there, the "valley" led to Calcutta and civilization. But below them, it was different. In geographical actuality, most of Upper Assam serves as the flood plain of the Brahmaputra, tabletop-flat with only small rivers and streams breaking the surface. The dead-level flatness was quite evident on the ground, but from ten thousand feet up, the land resembled a perfect plain.

"Look at all that," Arnold said, sweeping his arm around the cockpit and indicating the pool-table terrain below. "It's a fairway. It looks as though you could make a forced landing on the eighteenth hole in the dark with your eyes closed."

Keith felt as if he had been slapped. "It's not as smooth as you think," he said. "It looks a lot rougher when you get close to it."

Arnold put on a mock-serious expression. "Rough as a cob. Yes, sir, rough as a cob."

"I've got about a hundred friends who had to make forced landings there," Keith said quickly. "They're still down there. We didn't have any wounded on the Hump."

Arnold's look said to Keith that the younger man had decided the original Hump operation was one big hoax as far as danger was concerned, an exaggeration created by now-middle-aged pilots who remember only the ways they had loused up their flights.

Arnold smiled and said, "You're looking in good shape."

Now they were approaching mountains. Keith's eyes were hard little bits of sky. Arnold's grin faded.

Below, the two-mile-wide Brahmaputra swung sharply north into Tibet.

The plane was at thirteen thousand feet when it reached the area where Assam's easternmost tip nudged Burma. The Brahmaputra plain lay behind Keith and Arnold, and mountains ahead and

to both sides soared upward toward them.

"That's what we called the First Ridge," Keith said, pointing straight ahead. "There aren't many places in the world where you'd call a twelve-thousand-foot mountain a ridge."

Keith hadn't meant to sound school-teacherish, but was afraid he had.

He brightened when Arnold replied, "This is the only place where you'd call it a ridge." Then he added, "This plane could top it with an engine out. Don't you remember? What a rough cob, Captain!"

Keith put on his oxygen mask and told Arnold to do the same.

CHAPTER FIVE

Well, under an hour out of Doom Dooma, the C-46 was in the Himalayas. Except for his memory—was it more than memory because he had crossed the Hump more than two hundred times?—all Keith had to navigate by was the compass. That was something he hadn't discussed with Arnold. He was navigating the way you would in a primary trainer—by following a compass heading and hoping to recognize features of the landscape that could serve as check points. Well, so far so good. Keith believed he would have no trouble "steering" to Yunnan Province.

He signaled Arnold to take the controls, slowed the engines, put the supercharger in high blower, increased the power and, by pointing to the rate-of-climb instrument, ordered Arnold to take the plane up at the standard five hundred feet a minute.

Briefly, they would fly over the narrow panhandle of North Burma. There would be a level area, far below, and that was where there was a place the British had called Fort Hertz, before World War II, and that the naked, head-collecting locals called Putao. There wasn't one chance in a thousand that a Burmese plane would be here, but any military plane that wanted to could knock them down and they would never be heard of again. Unimportant incident. Mystery plane, origin unknown, wandered over the Burma border and was lost.

The news wouldn't even reach near-by Myitkyina or, further down, Kipling's Mandalay. An incident so unimportant, it really never occurred. But Keith had good reason to remember this particular area on the "road" past Mandalay. He had had a real incident here in 1944.

It was a routine flight. Keith, the officer who was to be his copilot, the crew chief and a radio operator had been alerted for a flight and then called out in time for a 0930 take-off. A lucky day-

light flight. Almost all the crashes occurred at night and, unlike the flight crews in other theaters, the men in CBI always hoped for daylight flights.

The four men arrived at the plane by 0900, each with his parachute, oxygen mask, gas mask, forty-five and helmet stowed in his big parachute bag. As they started to board the plane, they were told there was a "mechanical." Repair would take an hour. Usually Keith made a walk-around preflight check of the plane that took a couple of minutes. This time, he circled and circled in the deadly sun, trying to kill the whole hour.

The radio operator went to sleep on the concrete in the shadow of the wing; the copilot sat on the ground beside his parachute bag studying and restudying the Hump maps and the flight plan; the flight crew worked inside the plane with the ground crew men responsible.

At the end of the hour, Keith, sweat-drenched and shaky, climbed inside the plane to ask how the repair was going. The mechanics were still working on it. Another hour passed. The radio operator's uniform was drenched and he lay awake, staring up at the wing. The copilot looked around at the bamboo. Keith circled the plane, cursing.

The rule stated that a crew had to wait four hours for a plane with a "mechanical" bad enough to keep her grounded. Well, now they have been waiting three hours and three-quarters. Fifteen minutes more, and the flight was off for them.

"Captain. Captain." The flight crew chief was calling from the plane's cargo door.

Keith rapped the copilot and the radio operator on their shoulders and went to the plane. He said nothing.

With their rock-battered, bleached summer uniforms sweated to almost black, he and his copilot raced through the check list and got off the ground in record time. The copilot handled clearance and other communications with the control tower. Keith maintained complete silence.

After the plane had swung into take-off position at the end of the strip, Keith applied full left rudder and roughly gunned the engines to full throttle. Usually, he prided himself on his smooth plane-handling, but not this time. He was too tired, too disgusted, too sick of dangerous flying. Also, he hadn't eaten for a day and a half, hadn't had a meal since some eggs in China on the last trip. He knew he wasn't fit to command a Hump flight.

His fast, rough opening of the throttles didn't bother the magnificent engines. If it had in the slightest, the plane would have gone straight into the bank of the

little river perpendicular to the far end of the runway. Keith knew that for certain. According to the cargo section of the flight plan, the plane grossed well over fifty-three thousand pounds.

Back in the States, the civilian pilots testing the C-46s considered forty-nine thousand enough of a load for an untried C-46 transport. But not on the Hump.

This time, the plane had what was more or less the standard Hump load: twenty-three fifty-five-gallon steel drums of hundred-octane strung along the fuselage and, in the rear, a ton and a half of bomb fuses. That was standard, customary. But some cargo "specialist"—some groundling, some paddlefoot who never flew—had persuaded Operations to permit addition of some earth-mover parts. "Just a few pounds." Ha! Probably a lethal few pounds.

But the plane got off the ground and when Keith reduced the rpms and the inches of mercury right after take-off, she continued to go up. As though the routine climb was a surprise to him, Keith looked around the cockpit and gave the thumbs-up sign. The copilot and the other two crew members did the same.

With the ascent, the plane cooled off. Keith gave the controls to his copilot and stretched in comfort. Then he looked around the landscape as they approached the First Ridge. Yes. It was going to be a good flight, after all.

The plane went up to ten thousand smoothly and then Keith took the controls again while the copilot put on his oxygen mask. Then the copilot, turning to the left toward the cabin, yelled to the radio operator and the crew chief to put their masks on.

Before he spoke, Keith grabbed his arm. Keith hadn't put his mask on yet. He had a furious look on his face.

"Goddamn it! One of them is smoking back there. I want to see both of them."

The copilot went and returned quickly. He had a wild look and he was shaking his head negatively. He ripped his oxygen mask to one side.

"Neither's smoking."

"Well, something is!" Keith snapped. "Did you check the barrels for leaks? Get back there again. I'll fly."

Keith stayed on course, toward the Hump and China, while the copilot rummaged about back in the fuselage.

The crew chief entered the cockpit. "Captain, there's a lot of smoke," he said. "I can't tell what it is."

"How about the fuel drums?"

"No leaks, Captain. That's okay. But the copilot wants to get rid of them."

"Don't bother. Get him back here." Keith had decided what to do.

When the copilot returned, Keith said, "Climb back in your seat and get on the

horn. Call the tower; say we have a fire."

Keith made a gradual one-eighty turn back to the base, adjusted the power settings for letdown, looked frequently at the engines' cylinder-head temperature readings. He listened to the copilot's talk with the tower.

The tower operator was saying: "X-ray Sugar Six. You say you're one hour out? Remain on course, remain on course. Right back to you."

Keith had everything under control. He shallowed the descent. His actions were firm, well thought out. The crew chief, pale and concerned, was leaning into the cockpit from the doorway. He scanned the instrument panel.

"The radio operator's getting ready to jump."

Keith looked at the copilot, who had four Hump trips to his credit. "Radio operators are always ready to jump. Maybe it's because they're closest to the door—and don't have enough to do at a time like this." He turned his head to the crew chief. "Tell him to come on up here." He took his forty-five out of his shoulder holster and laid it across his lap.

Then he heard the voice of the tower operator: "X-ray Sugar Six. Is there any smoke? Over."

The copilot skipped communications niceties. "The plane's filled with smoke and—"

"X-ray Sugar Six. You're one hour out?" "Roger."

"X-ray Sugar Six. Will call back."

By this time, the C-46 was down to four thousand feet and the base was clearly in sight.

"X-ray Sugar Six. Okay. You may return."

Keith shut the radio off, never asking for landing instructions. He landed the plane minutes after he had received permission theoretically to turn around a full hour out.

The copilot, the crew chief, the radio operator trooped out of the plane after him. An engineering officer was at the hardstand, but Keith didn't stop to speak to him. He motioned for the crew chief to talk to the officer.

It evolved that, through a major defect in the hydraulic system, the pressure had become so great that the hydraulic fluid itself was burning. Considering that the fuel system was the bloodstream of the aircraft, this was somewhat like having the lymph system in a person's body on fire.

Keith walked into the Operations shack with his head slightly lowered—not in shame for having taken things into his own hands and saving the plane and the crew—but ready to fight in every inch of his pint-sized body.

The three officers behind the Opera-

tions counter acted as one. Each opened his mouth to speak, said nothing, looked at his wrist watch. It was evident that Keith had returned to base, shirt-circuiting the flight, long before getting permission.

Keith went as close to the Operations men as he could, stood there eyeing them. These ground-loving bastards! he thought savagely. If he had been a few minutes farther along the way, he would have been ordered to try to go on over

the Hump—with the plane on fire—and tons of hundred-octane and bomb fuses in the belly!

Keith stood for a full minute with his hands on his hips. No one spoke.

The brief flight went into the books as an engineering test.

Keith was to remember that place in the wildest part of the earth, where he made the turnaround. Right below him now.

(Continued Next Month)

Taj Mahal may be sinking into the bank of the Jumna

The magnificent Taj Mahal, the peerless monument to love which is India's major tourist attraction, may be sinking ever so slowly into the bank of the sacred Jumna River.

Mogul Emporer Shah Jahan's memorial to his second wife is in no immediate danger of crumbling, but some experts in the Department of Archeology say prompt remedial action is needed.

The Taj first developed cracks in portions of its massive underground foundation several years after its completion, about 1654.

An Englishman, Capt. Joseph Taylor, made repairs in 1810, according to local records. Additional repairs were made in 1874.

A recent check showed the tilt of the Taj's four minarets has increased, with one leaning nearly nine inches. Cracks in upper reaches of the huge marble dome are reported to be enlarging.

The Indian Express has called for immediate action to check the damage.

"Will the architect of the Taj pay such a high price for selecting the site so near the river?" the newspaper asked. "Posterity will never forgive us if we fail to do our duty in preserving it and passing it down to future generations as it has been passed down to us."

Whatever cracks there may be in the 300-year-old monument, it is still a work of art. Whether viewed at the break of dawn, in the glaring midday sun or in the sheen of a full moon, the Taj lives up to every expectation of the tourist.

A good portion of the \$33.6 million in foreign exchange which India earned from tourists last year must be credited to the Taj.

Special air, rail and bus services are provided from New Delhi to Agra, a distance of 120 miles, and efficient guide

service is readily available. Beggars and peddlers are pretty well kept away.

Shah Jahan had the Taj built as a sepulcher for his second—and favorite—wife, Mumtaz Mahal, Exalted of the Palace, she bore 14 of the emperor's children. She died while giving birth to his eighth son in 1630, while the shah was waging a battle campaign nearby.

The shah invited designs for the monument and finally selected one by Ustad Isa, a Persian.

The emperor brought in skilled craftsmen from France, Italy, Persia and Turkey, and threw 20,000 laborers into the construction. It took about 22 years. One Indian government publication estimates the original cost at \$70 million.

A massive base of sandstone was constructed, topped by a marble platform 313 feet square. On it was erected the central mausoleum with an entry archway 90 feet high and a dome 60 feet in diameter.

Slender marble minarets 130 feet tall were built on the platform's four corners, but because of the over-all size of the structure the minarets do not look so tall.

The entire Koran, Moslem holy book, was transcribed on the outer walls of the mausoleum, the script in black marble inlays. The letters get progressively larger in ascending rows, and to a person standing on the ground they all appear to be the same size.

Two smaller red sandstone mosques flank the mausoleum and a high wall was built around the 42 acres of gardens. There is a three-story gateway on one side; opposite is the Jumna River.

The Taj is symmetry to perfection, with one small flaw. While Mumtaz Mahal's tomb is centered beneath the great dome, the son of Shah Jahan cut costs and did not build another mausoleum for his father. He buried him in a tomb on one side of the Mumtaz Mahal's.

Indian folklore has it that Mumtaz Mahal, near death, made the emperor promise he would raise over her grave a mausoleum worthy of the love she gave him in their 18 years of married life. That he succeeded no one would dispute.

BOOK REVIEWS



THE RED PAVILION. By Robert van Gulik. Scribners. January 1968. \$3.95.

Another in the series about Judge Dee, famous detective of ancient China, published after the death of the author. As usual, the suave magistrate solves knotty criminal problems, all of them stemming out of the fact that he elects to stay in the infamous Red Pavilion on Paradise Island, not knowing it has been the scene of several mysterious deaths in the past. The Chinese atmosphere is suitable exotic.

MAYA: THE FORBIDDEN CITY. By Norman Daniels. Berkley Books Originals. December 1967. Paperback, 50c.

First novelization of an episode from the television series, "Maya," and of interest to the "young CBers," 9 to 12 years of age. An American boy, Terry Bowen, his Hindu friend Radji, and the elephant Maya are riding through the jungles of southern India searching for Terry's father, missing in a hunting accident. On their way the boys kill four leopards, penetrate a forbidden and very dangerous abandoned city, are captured by a desperate gang of elephant poachers and come out all right.

WORK INCENTIVE PRACTICES AND POLICIES IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 1953-1965. By Charles Hoffman. State University of New York Press. January 1968. \$6.00.

Chinese work incentives have ranged from the purely monetary—increased wages and bonuses—through welfare services, to merit awards, citations and honors. Prof. Hoffman examines their operation on farms and in factories, in communes and in cities, and their use in developing new skills and industries. This is an important addition to the sparse literature on the Chinese economy of interest to anyone seeking more complete understanding of contemporary China.

CHOU EN-LAI: China's Gray Eminence. By Kai-yu Hsu. Doubleday. January 1968. \$5.95.

This is a biography of China's second in command, the premier of the Peking regime. The author sees him as a diplomat of considerable ability, an expert at intra-party politics, and a leader

strongly intrenched with the Chinese youth, the intelligentsia, the army and the Chinese Communist Party. The book indicates that Chou En-Lai is no longer Mao Tse-tung's man. Information comes from available books and from interviews and testimony from those who have known Chou, including some of his relatives. The author is professor of humanities and foreign languages at San Francisco State College, and has been foreign news editor of the Chinese World Daily in San Francisco.

MEMORIES FOR A CHINESE GRANDDAUGHTER. By Stuart and Roma Gelder. Stein and Day. April 1968. \$6.95.

A description of Chinese society today by a couple who traveled throughout the country in 1966. The authors talked to people in all walks of life. The book, according to the authors, is "an explanation, not an apology or a condemnation," of Mao's China. They point out anything they found to be interesting and positive in addition to those things which were sad and negative.

THE NEW YEAR. By Pearl S. Buck. John Day. March 1968. \$5.95.

This is another book by Pearl S. Buck with a theme obviously close to her heart, the plight of racially mixed children who may be outcasts in their Asian mothers' native land. This is a novel about a half-Korean 12-year-old son of an American, brought to this country and taken into the father's household at the insistence of his understanding wife. The father is campaigning for governor at the start of the story and wins the election. The climax comes when the couple gives a New Year's Eve party and introduces the son to the assembled guests with the father giving a straightforward account of how lonely American soldiers overseas can find themselves in the same situation.

THE LUCIFER CELL. By William Fennerton. Atheneum. February 1968. \$5.75.

A mystery and suspense story taking place in Great Britain at some hypothetical time in the future when the Chinese Communists have conquered Europe and imposed their way of life on England. The story is about Adam Brett, head of the resistance movement's political liquidation department and his efforts to eliminate the Quisling prime minister. His resolve and ingenuity are challenged from the start by treachery, bad luck and the cunning of his enemies. It shows a picture of a dreary, defeated, brainwashed England, living a regimented life under the Red Chinese occupation forces.

EX-CBI ROUNDUP



MADRAS—Are eggs a vegetarian item of diet? According to the Indian Vegetarian Congress, eggs are not taboo for its members, who are expected to abstain strictly from eating fish, fowl and meat. The chairman of the Congress said it had not included eggs, milk and honey among non-vegetarian foods. The Indian Vegetarian Congress was set up in 1957 to promote vegetarianism.

NAGPUR—There has been a sharp rise in thefts in Nagpur city. According to the police commissioner, juvenile delinquents have had a big hand in it. He revealed that more than 700 boys under 18 had been arrested in recent months. He ascribed this tendency among the juveniles to the influence of undersirable movies, which sometimes painted a "villain as a hero." He also maintained that children of poor families took to crime as a means of reaching a higher standard of living.

CALCUTTA—Most observers thought that fewer earthen lamps were used at last fall's Diwali. Candles were much in use; and a good deal of the illumination was through electricity. Scarcity or the high price of oil perhaps explains part of the changeover. "Although candles are easier to handle the earthen lamps had about them a glow which is sadly missing in candles and loud neon lights seem plainly vulgar."—Indian notebook.

CALCUTTA—With the announcement that Dave Brubeck was to disband his quartet many Indians were disappointed. Twelve years ago, he and his group appeared in India and in honor of his Indian visit a number called "Calcutta Blues" was composed by him. This number, later released on a long playing record, was perhaps among the first scores that blended the traditional Indian ragas with the avant garde modern jazz.

DARJEELING—Two British nationals and an American, who have been on temporary tourist permits, have been served a notice to leave the district immediately. The Superintendent of Police said they would be prosecuted under the Foreigners Act if they failed to comply with the order.

NEW DELHI—It is hoped that men of politics will not wait to be imprisoned or interned before they write their memoirs. It is not merely in economic terms that India is a poor country; the

poverty of writing on contemporary history is also appalling. Even the historic landmark of the twentieth anniversary of Independence did not seem to stimulate much writing. It is likely that valuable raw material of history will be dissipated. In a few weeks "The Collected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru" will be published, but it consists largely of the public speeches of the late Prime Minister. His writing, before he took office in the Central Government, and the mass of his private papers are still locked up in Teen Murti House.

CALCUTTA—Cyclists, so far as the police are concerned, are un-persons. No doubt this is partly because bicycles, unlike motors, scooters or rickshaws, carry no numbers and require no licenses. For a cyclist to possess a headlamp or even a rear reflector is a great rarity. Since the cyclist apparently regards it as his birthright to ride all over the road and has usually never heard of safety precautions, the risk of accidents is appalling. What also is appalling is, if some one hits him, the offender may either be lynched or involved in litigation.

MADRAS—Madras suffered a staggering loss of between 50,000 tons and 1000,000 tons of grain on account of the sprouting of wet paddy. This is said to have occurred because of delay in the harvesting of mature paddy as a result of heavy rain and also because of transport bottlenecks. Officials are reluctant to talk about this as it was their failure to ensure speedy transport of harvested paddy to drying centres and mills that was partly responsible for the loss. They grudgingly concede that between 10% and 20% of the Tanjore crop was lost, but blame it on the weather gods.

NEW DELHI—The Soviet Union is emerging as a major new factor in India's educational system. Unnoticed and unheralded, its influence has steadily been growing over the years. There has been a massive new dose of Russian aid and expertise in the field of technical education. Curiously the people who were so vehement in condemning the off-again on-again Indo-U. S. Educational Foundation as a grave threat to academic and intellectual integrity of the country, are silent about the new phenomenon. At the Education Ministry the introduction of the Soviet element on such a scale is considered inevitable, not so much because India could not manage on her own, but largely because the technological gap had to be bridged quickly. Previous Soviet arrangements has been routed through UNESCO. In the new arrangement Soviet assistance will henceforth be managed directly by India.

Commander's Message

by

Alfred Frankel

National Commander
China-Burma-India
Veterans Assn.



Salaams CBI Friends:

Admiral of the Fleet, The Earl Mountbatten of Burma was in Philadelphia during the week of March 11, in connection with Variety Club activities. Thursday morning, March 14th, a group of Delaware Valley Basha members and I spent a delightful, though too short visit with him. We were greeted warmly by the Admiral, who chatted with us for several minutes before rushing off to keep pace with a hectic schedule.

Our Basha presented him with a CBI plaque, which he very graciously received. I then presented him with a citation electing him a National Honorary Lifetime Member of CBIVA. He was most appreciative of this fine honor, even though it was a rough draft written hurriedly only an hour before seeing him that morning. The presentation was informal, but I thought that it should be read to him. There was one part that read: Southeast Asia Training Command. I realized my error as soon as the word "Training" came out. He stopped with: "What do you mean training? I brought you over there to fight!" He was quite insistent that the word be omitted. I assured him that this was not the copy he'd receive, that it did not matter, that a formal, printed copy suitably framed would have the correct wording. He nevertheless insisted that he wanted the rough copy, as well as the formal copy. Do you know he marched me to a desk and made sure that I crossed out that word. The formal copy will be mailed to England as soon as it is ready.

We were presented with an autographed program of his visit to Philadelphia. I am forwarding this along with a copy of the Citation to Milwaukee for our archives at National Headquarters in the War Memorial Center.

I must confess, it was a genuine thrill to meet this gentleman. He was very much at ease with his former troops, and I suspect he got as big a charge out of this meeting as we did.

The following is the Citation with correct wording: China-Burma-India Veter-

ans Assn. at the top with CBI patch below in center of upper portion of page—it read as follows:

CITATION TO ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET, THE EARL MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA, WHO AS SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA COMMAND ENDEARED HIMSELF TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE ALLIED FORCES SERVING UNDER HIM. AS A TOKEN OF OUR ESTEEM AND APPRECIATION FOR HIS SERVICES AND FRIENDSHIP WE HEREBY ELECT HIM TO LIFETIME HONORARY MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHINA-BURMA-INDIA VETERANS ASSOCIATION, Dated March 14, 1968. Signed by Alfred Frankel, National Commander—attested by Haldor Reinholt, Past National Commander.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is the scene of the Spring National Executive Board Meeting, May 3rd and 4th. Record attendance is anticipated due to the efforts of the Iowa Basha. Many of the state's famous products will be offered for our sampling. Sausage, chicken, steak, brown bottle material, etc. Come on up! All business transacted along with the social aspects of the meeting will be given in a future message.

Reunion fever will have many of us in its grip before long. Once you've seen the varied, interesting program that is planned, I'm sure you will hasten to make a reservation. Start planning to Make A Date For The Corn State.

Irma and I will hit the road for a visit to the Buffalo Basha to participate with them in their annual "Ladies Appreciation Night." We are looking forward to revisiting the site of the 1962 reunion on April 20th. This too will be reported in detail at a later date.

Reunion time is near for many outfits both large and small. I hope that they will consider holding a joint reunion with us in the not too distant future. I believe the many advantages have been given in past messages, however I do urge you to once again discuss it during your business sessions when a decision is made on a site for future reunions. Please contact me for information.

ALFRED FRANKEL
120 Yellowstone Rd.
Plymouth Meeting, Pa.

Be Sure to Notify Roundup

When You Change Your Address.



BURMESE PAGODA in the Eden Gardens at Calcutta, India. This pagoda was removed in 1965, having deteriorated badly over the years. Photo by J. L. Rosenfeld.

W. C. Mathews

● Services for W. C. "Big Matt" Mathews, were held Thursday, March 13, 1968, at Tupelo, Miss. Mr. Mathews died as the result of an automobile accident, and he was 62 years of age at the time of his death. Mr. Mathews was born at Millington, Tenn., and after becoming a civil engineer, at a very tender age he was employed by Mississippi Highway Department as a road and bridge engineer. After WWII he and Henry Whifield formed the M & W Construction Co., at Tupelo, where "Matt" had lived nearly 30 years. He was, in the last two or three years, in the furniture manufacturing business, at a small place out some ten or twelve miles from Tupelo. And giving employment to some 80 to 100 people of all colors. "Matt's" wife, Miriam, and their children were the pride of his life, and when you have talked with a

friend long after the lights are out in an area like North Burma, in 1943 and 1944-45 you pretty well know how he thinks. He was not "ARMY"—But when the Country needs CAN-DO-MEN with know-how, they go outside the stockade and bring them in. So it was with Big Matt. He remembered they had told him to salute with the right arm—after that the Army left him. Since they knew he knew about roads and bridges they gave him a Capt. Commission, for with years of experience and know-how; they did **not** have them coming out of the Army Schools at Belvoir (etc). The way I remember it the Chinese bridge on the Nam Yung River, about two miles north from Tagap, washed out when we received about 17 inches of rainfall in maybe two days. We lost over 300 bridges and culverts and the war almost came to a dead stop. No-body could move anything.

But the Nam Yung River was the most culprit of all at 22 MPH (as per the instruments), and six men were lost in this stream and not one body was ever recovered. The Chinese had built the gone-bridge on "mud sills." A number of our people, with impressive rank, had already said, "You cannot drive piling in these streambeds because of gravel and small boulders," and their sage advice had been accepted up to then. And then the bridge man from Mississippi came on and looked. He borrowed two engineer soldiers and two 6x6's and went to Ledo (Liki Pani Engr. Depot) where three piledrivers had been rusting in the weeds. He got one loaded and came back with it and attached it to a crane-dragline unit and we had the teak logs for piling for him. He, personally drove the first pile into the streambed 22 feet—And in 24 hours the bridge was across the Nam Yung, that would not wash out—and there was not enough piledriver rigs in the theatre. For this man from Mississippi showed the Heavy Brass that they did not know what they were talking about. After all, what were we over there for, unless it was to maintain a land link with China?? Everything else was supplementary. And this bridge man from Mississippi showed how it could be done.

CARL O. JOHNSON,
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Look for Roundup

● Several of us in the State Budget Division (Frank Reilly, Bob Vegso, Marc Baker and I) and Dick McKeon in the State Welfare Department look forward each month to the Roundup.

ALBERT C. HOOVER,
Middletown, Conn.

WELCOME


CHINA - BURMA - INDIA VETERANS

HOTEL SAVERY

DES MOINES

Your Convention
Headquarters

Visit Our
New

 **Governor's Table**

Restaurant

Best Steaks In
Iowa

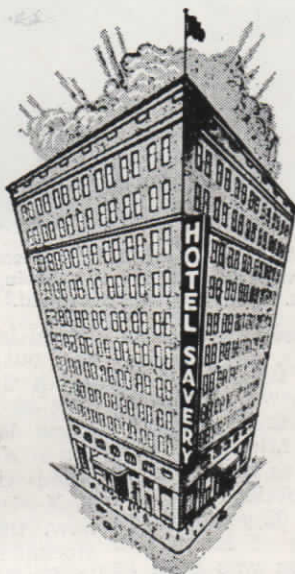
Serving

Breakfast

Luncheon

Dinner

7 Days a Week



THERE'S FUN FOR YOU
in the

le Salon Bleu

Cocktail Lounge

Paul E. Lefton, Manager

Robert D. Scott, Sales Manager